

~~Top Secret~~

POLAND

Yesterday's meeting of top Soviet and Polish leaders will strengthen the Polish Government's determination in today's critical confrontation with the new trade unions.

Although the public description of the visit was carefully worded to avoid the appearance that the Soviets were putting pressure on the Poles, Moscow probably urged party leader Kania to hold firm and hopes the impact of the trip will encourage moderation by trade union militants.

The Soviet report of the visit, however, suggested Moscow retains substantial reservations about the Polish regime's ability to assert party supremacy over the new unions. Although President Brezhnev was said to have voiced "conviction" that Poland will be able to resolve its "acute" problems, he failed to endorse Kania personally or to indicate support for the Pole's approach to the current situation. This suggests the Soviets will be carefully assessing the outcome of the current negotiations with an eye to exerting more open pressure on the regime and the unions.

Moscow apparently was not particularly forthcoming in meeting Polish economic needs. The only concrete accomplishment seemed to be an understanding to "work out" economic programs. The Soviets, moreover, appeared to stress that Poland must make better use of its existing economic base and rely on its own resources in satisfying popular economic aspirations.

It is questionable whether the Polish trade union leaders will be heavily influenced by the Polish leaders' hasty visit to Moscow or Brezhnev's statements, and their meeting today with Premier Pinkowski presumably will be very difficult. Both sides are arguing what they consider an important matter of principle, but both seem to realize the gravity of the situation. It is possible, therefore, that nothing will be resolved today and that talks will continue at a later date.

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Some Poles are taking a very gloomy attitude. A Deputy Foreign Minister [redacted] on Wednesday that he feared the situation might deteriorate further "with catastrophic consequences for Poland and all of Europe." He also hinted that he feared a Soviet intervention by saying that Poland might become an "object of international relations." The official said he still hoped a reformed party could rally the populace and unite the country, but believes there is little time left to reestablish stability and that the "problem" is not free trade unions but "how to save an independent Poland."

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